CLAIM AMENDMENTS

1. (currently amended) A method of making porous near-net-shape metallic ~~and/or ceramic~~ parts with an open porosity of at least 10% by volume, the method comprising ~~according to~~ the steps of:

a) forming an injectable mass of a metallic ~~and/or a ceramic~~ powder of stainless steel, Ti, NiTi, or a titanium alloy, at least one thermoplastic binder, and at least one place holder;

b) injection molding the mass into the shape of the part to be produced;

c) cooling the injection-molded mass and setting it in a capillary-active material and subjecting it to a first-stage binder removal to produce an open porosity;

d) removing the place holder at least partially from the part with a fluid;

e) subjecting the part to a thermal binder-removing process;

f) subsequently sintering the part.

2. (original) The method according to claim 1 wherein the place holder is NaCl, KCl, K_2CO_3, or Na_2CO_3.

3. (canceled)

4. (previously presented) The method according to claim 1 wherein between steps c) and d) there is a thermal binder-removing step.

5. (original) The method according to claim 4 wherein the thermal binder-removing step is conducted at a temperature up to 270°C under a protective-gas atmosphere.

6. (previously presented) The method according to claim 5 wherein the starting powder has a particle size of less than 20 μm.

7. (currently amended) The method according to claim [[6]] 4 wherein the thermal binder-removing step is conducted at a temperature up to 500°C and under a protective-gas atmosphere.

8. (currently amended) The method according to claim 2 wherein [[a]] the fluid ~~heated up to~~ is at about 50°C ~~is used~~.

9. (previously presented) The method according to claim 1 wherein the fluid for removing the place holder is water.

10. (original) The method according to claim 1 wherein a stirred water bath is used in order to remove the place holder.

11. (previously presented) The method according to claim 1 wherein the thermal binder-removing step uses argon as a protective gas.

12. (currently amended) The method according to claim 1 wherein an open porosity in the part is produced of at least 30% by volume ~~, in particular 50% by volume~~.

13. (new) The method according to claim 1 wherein an open porosity in the part is produced of <u>about</u> 50% by volume.